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CHAPTER XIII

TWENTY YEARS' CHANGE

How does Christianity interact with other revolutionary forces in the community? It has been possible to observe the changes that have taken place among the Nyakyusa after a lapse of twenty years, and a summary of them is necessary before we proceed to a discussion of the links between religious and secular change.

The first thing that strikes a visitor returning to Nyakyusa country after many years, is that the isolation, which was so typical of the valley, has greatly diminished. Buses, filled with Nyakyusa passengers, cross twice daily the high pass that leads out of the valley, and where once travellers died of exposure and starvation there is a hard road fringed with homesteads and fields. The belt of unoccupied country that even twenty years ago separated the Nyakyusa from their neighbours has disappeared, for they themselves have spilled out of the valley to the north and west, and their Kinga neighbours have come down the Livingstone escarpment to the east and cultivate the mountain slopes, for 'they no longer fear that people (i.e. the Nyakyusa) will seize their property'. Men travel abroad to find work and they go much farther and stay away longer than before. In the remotest village there is some man who has visited Burma or Malaya as a soldier, and a dozen lads who will argue the relative merits of the Orange Free State gold mines and the Copper-belt as centres of employment. Many women now accompany their husbands to Rhodesia, or other parts of Tanganyika, and some travel to visit daughters or sisters. The older women enlarge on their journeys and joke about how fearful they used to be.

Travel implies learning another language, most often Swahili, but also Bemba and English and the pidgin of the gold and copper mines called Fanakalo. Thus intellectual isolation is disappearing along with the physical isolation. The numerous 'bush schools' which existed in the Nyakyusa valley in 1938, and at which many of those who attended never even learnt to read and write, have been largely replaced by mission primary schools, state-aided and inspected, and in these and the Native Authority primary and middle schools there are now 9,437 pupils, as against about 500